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Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the review of the operational capacity of the United Nations Military Observers*

Summary

United Nations Military Observers (UNMOs) play a crucial role in peacekeeping operations that has evolved from monitoring compliance with ceasefire agreements to more complex tasks including governance, humanitarian and human rights issues.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services noted that, although several models of UNMO command and control are currently employed in missions, the requirement is for a more generic, and streamlined structure that allows greater integration of the staffs at higher level while maintaining operational independence at lower levels.

To enhance the mission preparedness of UNMOs it is necessary to ensure adherence to common standards in national training and to strengthen mission-specific training. Deployments and repatriations of UNMOs should be staggered to ensure continuity. Excessive delays in the initial deployment of UNMOs could be reduced by introducing a standby roster of qualified national candidates.

* The present report could not be submitted prior to the deadline due to the need to obtain comments of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the draft report.

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To enhance their security and safety, UNMOs should always operate within the range of reliable communications of armed contingents and should be provided with an armed escort, where necessary. However, UNMOs should remain unarmed, as being armed might compromise them operationally while not providing any meaningful protection. UNMOs should have an identity distinct from the armed contingents in order to emphasize their unarmed status.

The Office observed that the armed contingents and UNMOs both acknowledged their respective responsibilities towards each other. However, that relationship should be formalized with sufficient clarity in the force directives, clearly assigning the responsibility for the security of UNMOs to contingent forces, while making UNMOs accountable for gathering information. Logistical support to UNMOs needs improvement, including the provision of advanced technology.

Since UNMOs play a significant role in the end phases of a mission, there should be an effective exit strategy allowing them to continue to monitor and observe in order to ensure the sustainability of the peace process. The UNMO experiences should be summarized in a compendium of best practices and a focal point dealing with UNMO issues should be established in the Military Division.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations welcomed the review, saying it came at an appropriate time, and also acknowledged that it provided useful and relevant information and analysis that should give a new dimension to the ongoing review of UNMO policy.

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Abbreviations

CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CIVPOL	Civilian Police
CMO	Chief Military Observer
COS	Chief of Staff
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFC	Deputy Force Commander
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
FC	Force Commander
HF	high frequency
HQ	Headquarters
JMAC	Joint Mission Analysis Cell
JOC	Joint Operations Centre
Lt. Col.	Lieutenant Colonel
MINURSO	United Nations Mission in Western Sahara
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MSA	Mission subsistence allowance
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
ONUB	United Nations Operation in Burundi
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TCC	Troop contributing country
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMEE	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNMO	United Nations Military Observer
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMISET	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor
UNMOGIP	United Nations Monitoring Group in India and Pakistan
UNOMIG	United Nations Mission in Georgia
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTSO	United Nations Truce and Supervisory Organization
VHF	Very high frequency

I. Introduction

1. Initially, United Nations peacekeeping operations were military observer missions assigned to monitor ceasefires, truces or armistice agreements. The task of the United Nations Military Observer (UNMO) was limited to supervising, verifying and reporting compliance with ceasefire agreements, separation and withdrawal of forces, as well as monitoring the cessation of foreign assistance to former belligerents. More recently, the context and scope of peacekeeping has broadened, bringing about new challenges and making UNMO's role more complex. Threats to UNMO security have become more serious. However, the complexity of the environment and the new tasks did not appear to result in a commensurate revision of UNMO's role and operational modalities. The conceptualization of the verification and monitoring of peace agreements continues to be based more on traditional arms control theories than on the dynamics of conflict resolution, and is often guided by standard military concepts of operations rather than innovations designed specifically for the new responsibility of UNMOs for observation, monitoring and verification.

2. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Consulting Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) reviewed the operational capacity of UNMOs with a view to fostering action by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in enhancing their effectiveness and efficiency in the context of multi-dimensional peacekeeping. The review focused on issues crucial to UNMO operations, such as command and control, selection and training, deployment, rotation and repatriation, use of advanced technology and administrative and logistics support. It looked into the UNMO role in the mission vis-à-vis the armed contingents and how this affects their security and safety, as well as their cooperation and coordination with other components of the mission.

3. The Office collected information about UNMOs through questionnaires and interviews with key actors involved in the UNMO operations and national peacekeeping training centres. The terms of reference, questionnaires and response statistics are available in the Annex to the electronic version of this report available through the following web address: (www.un.org/depts/oios/mecd_report/2005_unmoreview.pdf). OIOS field visits to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), the United Nations Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) allowed for a closer look at UNMO operational issues and for a validation of the Office's findings and recommendations. OIOS greatly appreciates the cooperation extended to it by DPKO, field commanders and UNMOs in the course of this exercise, and this report incorporates the Department's comments of 18 March 2005 to a draft version of the report.

II. Evolution of peacekeeping and the role of United Nations Military Observers

4. Most post-cold war conflicts are civil wars in which front-lines are not always clear and warring parties not easily identified. Instead of armies, peacekeepers often have to deal with militia groups and private security forces in which the chains of command are harder to track. Rules of combat are often abandoned, and more

crucially, the casualties of war are now predominantly civilians, who are not only the victims, but also perpetrators. The collapse of state institutions exacerbates the conflict's impact.

5. For United Nations peacekeepers, the emphasis has shifted from a monitoring or observation role to active involvement in resolving and settling conflicts and preventing the resumption of hostilities. Contemporary multi-dimensional United Nations peacekeeping often includes, along with the supervision of ceasefires, the regrouping, disarmament and demobilization of combatants and their reintegration into civilian life and programmes for mine clearance, the return of refugees and displaced persons, the provision of humanitarian assistance, the restoration of law and order, the monitoring of respect for human rights, the observation and supervision of elections, and the coordination of support for economic rehabilitation and reconstruction. This broadening of peacekeeping activities has had a direct impact on the role of UNMOs, whose duties have also expanded beyond merely the monitoring of ceasefires and separation of forces.

6. Currently, 13 of the 17 United Nations peacekeeping missions worldwide have UNMOs. They are unarmed, wear national military uniforms and are often deployed and organized separately from the regular armed contingents. The diversity and complexity of the tasks of the military observer depend on the mandate of the particular mission and the prevailing political and military situation.

7. The comparative advantage of UNMOs is that they have wider and more flexible outreach into the ranks of belligerents and the civilian population than the armed contingents. They can rapidly and effectively obtain and report the most current information on controversial incidents and contentious developments that are of vital importance to the mission. They also monitor and assess evolving situations in areas of concern and provide their findings to a multidisciplinary Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC) that provides timely and comprehensive analyses to the leadership of the mission. Peacekeeping missions thus benefit from the more in-depth and wider ground coverage by UNMOs, which enhances their capacity to deal with complex situations.

8. OIOS noted the deep understanding by UNMOs of their role, tasks, challenges and operational requirements. Out of a total of 352 UNMO responses received to the OIOS questionnaire, 95 per cent viewed the challenges faced by UNMOs in contemporary peacekeeping operations as more complex than in traditional missions. They mostly attributed this to an increased involvement of the civilian population in conflicts and to the fact that belligerent forces were less willing to negotiate and compromise. All respondents believed that, based on their experiences, the challenges to individual UNMOs were becoming more demanding and the threats to their security and personal safety were increasing.

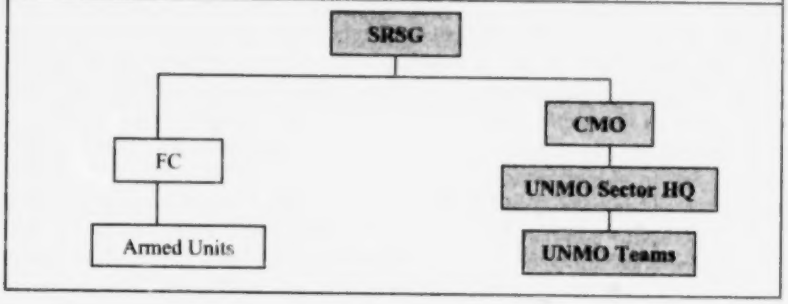
9. An area of concern reflected by three quarters of the respondents concerned administrative and logistics support from the mission headquarters. They were of the view that, in spite of the prevalent practice of an integrated support service concept in missions, the administration and logistics did not distinguish sufficiently between armed contingents and UNMOs, and treated the latter as if they were part of the self-sustaining contingent force. OIOS observed instances where, even when radio and observation equipment was available in mission, it was not issued to the UNMOs ostensibly on grounds that they are military, without consideration to their unarmed status.

III. Command and control

10. National armies have different concepts of command and control. OIOS is guided in this regard by the term "operational authority" as described in the United Nations General Guidelines for Peacekeeping Operations. According to the Guidelines, the head of the military component of a peacekeeping operation, who may not be the chief of mission, is given appropriate authority over all military units and personnel in the mission in the light of operational requirements. The command and control structure in peacekeeping operations is mission specific and varies widely, depending on the political and military situation and on the mission's operational requirements.

11. Typically, a peacekeeping mission comprises three components — civilian, military and civilian police. The military component may consist of armed contingents headed by a Force Commander (FC) and/or unarmed military observers. Among the 13 missions with UNMOs, four different organizational structures are currently used. Four of these missions use a model that is basically for observer missions (UNMOGIP, UNOMIG, UNTSO, MINURSO), where the Chief Military Observer (CMO) exercises full operational authority down to the UNMO teams. Three missions (UNMISET, UNMIK, UNAMA) use variations of a second model, which has a separate chain of command for UNMOs, who report directly to the Head of Mission. An example of this model is given below for UNMISET.

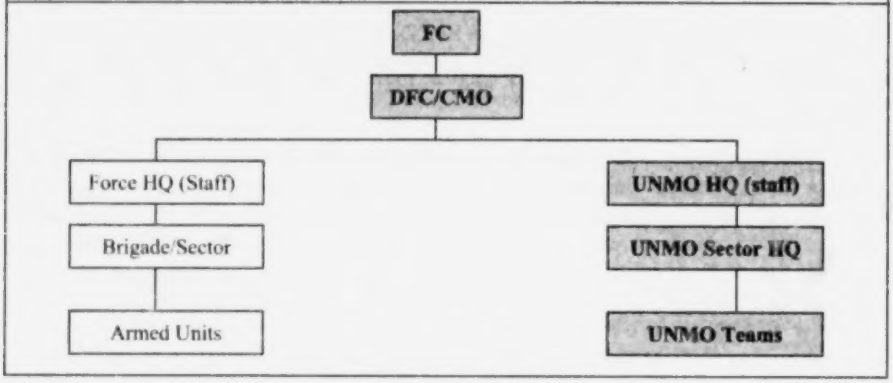
Figure 1: Command and Control Structure for UNMISET



12. In the second model, the underlying assumption is that UNMOs are a strategic-level asset that must be controlled at the highest level, i.e. the Head of Mission. Consequently, there must be two sets of "Concepts of Operations": one for UNMOs and one for armed contingents. Under this model, the information gathering by UNMOs tends to be dictated primarily by the political requirements of the mission, whereas the purely military concerns of the peacekeeping force are often given a secondary priority in the tasking of the UNMOs. This arrangement also complicates coordination at lower levels and lengthens the information transmission and reaction time, because reports must necessarily go up and down the two separate reporting lines.

13. The third model follows the principle of "unity of command", wherein all military units are under the operational authority of the FC. An example of this model is shown below for UNMIL.

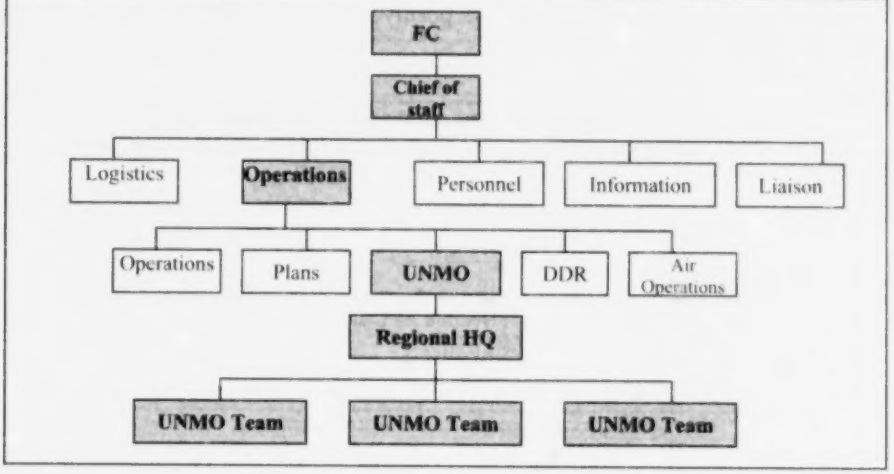
Figure 2: Command and Control Structure for UNMIL



Under this model (as applied in UNMIL and with slight variations in MONUC, UNAMSIL and UNMEE), the CMO is also the Deputy Force Commander (DFC), although below that level there are two distinct chains of command. OIOS observed that in reality, this model is the same as the second because the CMO does not function as a full-fledged DFC. Indeed, the usual function of a deputy, besides standing in for the commander in his/her absence, is to oversee administration and logistics, thereby allowing the commander to concentrate on other operational matters. However, in the peacekeeping context, where administration and logistics are mainly civilian functions, these responsibilities are minimal and the DFC reverts to his principal role as CMO. This model often hampers an effective flow of information, as in the case of UNAMSIL. During the period of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), while information was relayed regularly up the chain of UNMO command, the flow of information down to the team sites appeared inadequate, and few guidelines were provided as to the manner, speed and direction the DDR should take, leading to confusion and impeding the operational effectiveness of the UNMOs.

14. The main weakness of the second and third models lies in the physical separation of the UNMO chain of command from that of the armed contingents, resulting in structural restrictions for coordination at lower tactical levels. The fourth model as shown below reflects a greater integration of UNMOs into the command and control chain of the contingent force. This model, currently in use in ONUB and UNOCI, has UNMOs operating under the control of the Operations Branch at Force Headquarters.

Figure 3: UNMO Command and Control Structure in ONUB



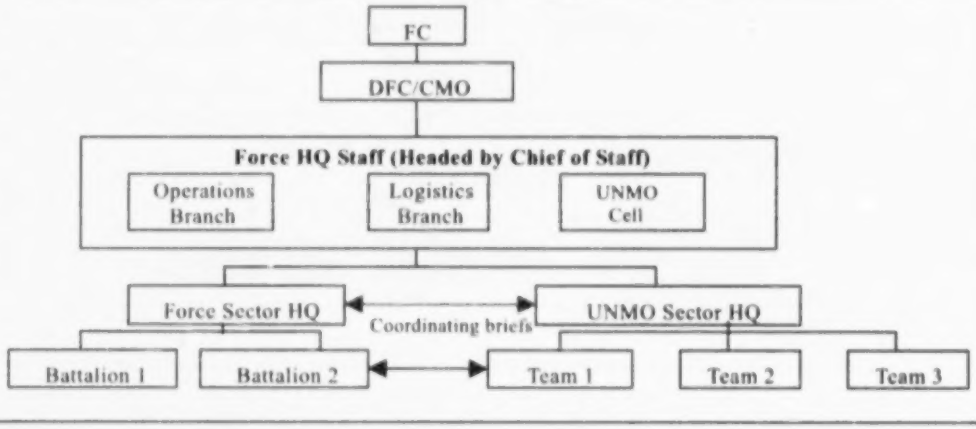
This model does not appear to optimize the operational effectiveness of the UNMOs for several reasons. First, the Operations Branch does not necessarily provide expert supervision because the national contingent staff in the Branch may not have UNMO experience, or sufficient time for UNMO activities owing to their full-time involvement with the operations of the armed contingents. Secondly, UNMO reports tend to pass through many layers in the chain of command, and consequently, the information that reaches the FC may have been filtered several times. In addition, UNMOs do not have a strong representation at the top level, which negatively affects their credibility among other mission components. The UNMOs are viewed as "just another card in the pack" and not as an important source for crucial information.

15 From the questionnaire responses, OIOS noted that 81 per cent of the respondents saw a need to keep the command structure for UNMOs separate from that of the armed contingents and headed by a CMO. This correlated with the responses from sector and battalion commanders, a majority of whom felt that UNMOs should not be subordinated to tactical-level commanders. More than 90 per cent of UNMOs felt that the post of CMO should not be abolished, as it provided them a direct link to the senior echelons of command. In missions where there is no designated CMO, UNMOs feel that their credibility is compromised, a view that was shared by many armed contingent commanders. The commanders at the sector level were of the view that UNMOs need not be placed under their operational command, but that mission orders and standard operating procedures (SOP) should be precise as to the nature of the relationship between the two elements. This would enable the armed contingents to provide essential security and administrative support to UNMOs when the need arose, while at the same time facilitating better coordination of operational activities.

16. To ensure effective integration, there must be a system that uses a common communications plan, SOPs and reporting procedures. The priority consideration should be to have a single and unified chain of command such that the operational needs of UNMOs receive attention at a high level in the mission hierarchy, at the

same time enabling unhindered upward flow of information gathered by UNMOs in the field. In this regard, OIOS believes that the ONUB model is too highly integrated. In order to incorporate the positive aspects of all the models, OIOS suggests the model shown below.

Figure 4: Suggested command and control structure

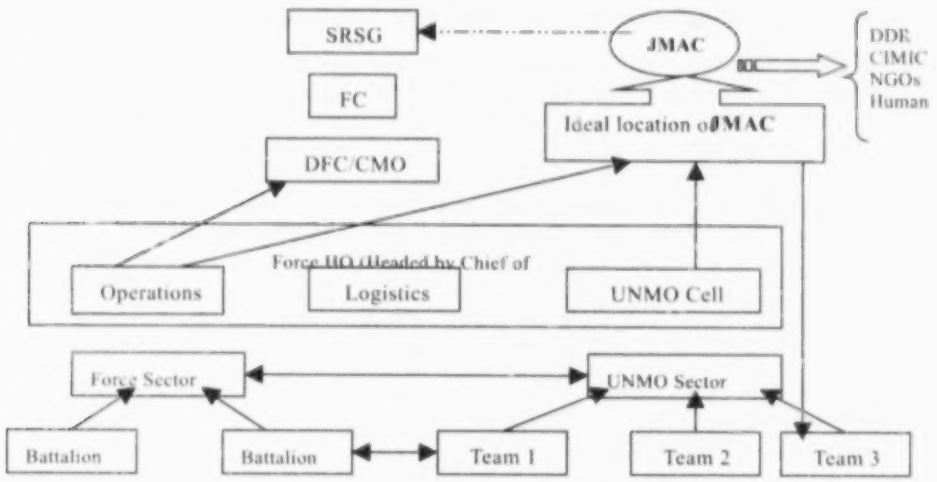


17. Under this model, both UNMOs and the armed contingents fall under the operational authority of the FC and their operational planning and control is exercised through a single headquarters headed by a Chief of Staff. This structure provides for effective integration of UNMOs through a single and unified chain of command at the Force Headquarters level while maintaining their operational identity and independence at the sector and lower levels. It also eliminates the need for separate operations room and duty officers substantially reducing the size of the headquarters staff. DPKO, too, has supported the Office's views that close cooperation between UNMOs and any peacekeeping force should be emphasized. The Department does not favour separate command and control arrangements between these two components. DPKO concurs with OIOS that both components should always be under the operational command of the FC and their operational planning and control should be exercised through a single headquarters. DPKO however, considers that, when appropriate, a small UNMO cell located in the G1 (personnel), G3 (operations) and/or G4 (logistics) groups at Force Headquarters should deal with UNMO-related matters, such as operational employment and administration including logistics. DPKO further informed OIOS that an observer cell had been established in MONUC Force Headquarters that reports to the FC through the Force Chief of Staff. The cell is manned by staff officers who do not have UNMO status.

18. Another advantage of this suggested structure is that the JMAC would be able to obtain unfiltered information and raw data from the sectors and UNMO teams, enabling it to make more accurate assessments. This improvement notwithstanding, it should be noted that currently the JMAC remains a purely military entity under the FC. As explained to the OIOS team, ideally, the JMAC should be operating at a level above the FC as a joint civil-military information analysis centre and reporting

directly to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). Then, the information flow would be as shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Information flow chart for the suggested command and control



19. While highlighting the advantages of the suggested command and control structure, OIOS recognizes that flexibility is important and that it should not be a "one-size-fits-all" model. The political and military situation and overall complexity of the peacekeeping mission have to be taken into consideration when deciding on a particular structure. OIOS sees merit in the views of DPKO in this regard, and encourages it to review the mission command and control structures of the newer missions for a comparative analysis in the future.

IV. The selection and training of United Nations Military Observers

20. In order to be able to cope with the challenges of living in difficult conditions and accomplishing diverse and complex tasks in high stress situations, often with no immediate support, officers selected as UNMOs need to be physically fit and psychologically sound. They should have a mature attitude and outlook as well as appropriate qualifications and mission experience. Three quarters of all respondents to the OIOS questionnaires stressed that the most pressing challenge faced by UNMOs was caused by team members having different levels of military skills, training and experience. In the order of importance, the next challenges identified by respondents were differing levels of language proficiency, driving skills, radio communications and map-reading skills (including use of global positioning system technology). DPKO has stated that, based on experience from past years, key issues of concern related to language proficiency and driving skills.

21. The divergent proficiency profiles of officers from different nations is not surprising, given the different mother tongues, military cultures, training standards, technology and even terminology used. Some nations select officers from their reserve components, while others select them from their active regular forces. While officers from either source may be equally qualified, they require different training strategies. Occasionally, officers are seconded as UNMOs not for their military skills and experience, but because of language and other proficiencies.

22. OIOS is cognizant that peacekeeping duties require personal attributes such as courage and commitment, interpersonal skills, patience, and the ability to assess and report, all of which are not easy to appraise. DPKO concurs with the Office's view that it would be very useful if all contributing nations followed the same selection criteria, including the required skills and standards of proficiency outlined in the Selection Standards and Training Guidelines for United Nations Military Observers (2002). National selection and training syllabi and modalities should be based on a clear understanding of the attributes required for UNMO duty, with emphasis on analytical skills, which are viewed as crucial, as OIOS gathered examples of UNMO patrol reports, which took the form of travel diaries owing to their inability to structure the content and come up with meaningful analyses.

23. OIOS acknowledges the various initiatives by DPKO to ensure that UNMOs deployed in the field have adequate training. In particular, the establishment of mission training cells by the Training and Evaluation Service, the pre-deployment training of UNMO team leaders, and the introduction of course curricula based on standardized training modules are commended. Based on the analysis of the requirement profile and inputs from respondents, OIOS believes that, to the extent possible, pre-deployment training should cover:

- the United Nations system, peacekeeping mission organization, and general administration, reports and procedures;
- the United Nations code of conduct and applicable international and local laws and customs;
- required military skills and their application in peacekeeping;
- communication skills (written and oral), relevant protocols and equipment;
- driving proficiency in the types of vehicles and terrain in the operational area;
- negotiation and mediation skills and techniques; and
- specialized training for duties such as election monitoring and humanitarian assistance.

24. OIOS found that some countries were not providing any UNMO training to their officers. For these officers, familiarization training on arrival to the mission served as their first observer training. However, for others who had received national training, the familiarization training was too simple and they suggested more focus on mission-specific aspects, including technology such as the global positioning system (GPS) and Lotus Notes. While DPKO has put in place a mechanism to evaluate and assess armed military contingents prior to their deployment, no such mechanism has yet been developed to assess pre-deployment preparedness of military observers. DPKO should require troop-contributing countries (TCCs) to certify that every proposed UNMO candidate has completed a

United Nations recognized UNMO course at a national peacekeeping training centre. While OIOS acknowledges national sensitivities regarding any form of oversight when it comes to military training, it is of the view that the development of common standards is the only way to enhance excellence in peacekeeping proficiency. In addition, OIOS emphasizes the need to explore the possibility of organizing centralized pre-deployment training for UNMOs in regional peacekeeping training centres as is being done for staff officers and UNMO team leaders.

25. OIOS re-emphasizes the following forceful actions to enhance the performance of UNMOs, most of which are currently being implemented by DPKO:

- prompt repatriation of those UNMOs who do not meet the established standards, with expenses to be paid by their countries;
- recommendation of the necessary remedial measures to countries that provide insufficiently trained UNMOs;
- refusal to accept UNMOs from nations that have not complied with DPKO recommendations; and
- holding the countries sponsoring UNMOs who damage United Nations equipment (such as vehicles) owing to poor training liable for repair/replacement costs, and holding the individual UNMO liable if the damage/loss was due to negligence.

26. OIOS observed that the selection of UNMO team leaders sometimes presents a problem. The current practice is for the longest serving UNMO at any given team site to be selected as team leader. However, questionnaire respondents indicated that the appointment of an UNMO of junior rank as the team leader (even though with longer service) has led to tensions and, in some cases, to a breakdown of military discipline. Taking this into account, a possible solution could be for the selection of team leaders to be based strictly on the rank but for deputy team leaders to be appointed on the basis of in-mission experience and leadership qualities. Of course, the final judgment guiding the decision should always rest with the FC/CMO.

27. OIOS noted that some troop-contributing countries tended to send officers of the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, even when they were specifically requested to send Majors and Captains, while others would make representations requesting to send more Lieutenant Colonels as team leaders. To ensure a balanced distribution of team leader positions among troop-contributing countries, these positions should be distributed in proportion to the overall number of observers that an individual country fields to that mission. Troop-contributing countries should therefore be requested to adhere strictly to the specified rank requirement in their selection of UNMOs. Furthermore, a common understanding must be worked out concerning promotions while on UNMO duty; promotion should either precipitate a withdrawal, or become effective only upon repatriation.

28. OIOS noted that participation of female UNMOs opens an opportunity for more effective engagement with female combatants, civilians and children. Also for the gender balance of the mission, a larger availability of UNMOs in female ranks should be encouraged.

V. Deployment, rotation and repatriation

29. For the initial deployment of military observers following authorization by the Security Council, the Military Division of DPKO initiates a request to the Permanent Missions of the troop-contributing countries, which normally includes the number of UNMOs, the ranks, proficiency and skill requirements, tour of duty, and tentative date of deployment. OIOS found that the slow response from some Member States was usually a delaying factor in deploying military observers to the field. In some cases, more than three months lapsed before arrival of UNMOs to the mission. OIOS noted that this situation has now improved with the creation of a "rotation cell" in the Force Generation Service and the use of a software program known as PMSTAR (Police and Military Staff Travel and Rotation), which DPKO will soon be making available to the Permanent Missions and at a later stage to the capitals of troop-contributing countries. DPKO further states that this database had indicated no delays during the year 2004 except for UNOMIG, where the troop-contributing countries had difficulty in obtaining visas. OIOS also acknowledges the difficulties faced by DPKO in the on-call system part of its Standby Arrangements System, which did not succeed owing to failure on the part of Member States to review the names of officers required every half year. However, OIOS wishes to point out that the Civilian Police Division had similar difficulties with initial deployments before establishing a standby roster of qualified candidates and believes that DPKO should also explore ways to apply the experiences and lessons learned by the Civilian Police Division to improve its system for deploying UNMOs.

30. Upon arrival in the mission, UNMOs are given induction and pre-deployment training at mission Headquarters, receive essential equipment and are then dispatched to a sector where they are provided with yet another set of briefings on the operational setting, duties and tasks. The UNMOs are then dispatched to the team site that serves as their operational base. In some missions, the whole procedure lasts 2 to 3 weeks before an observer becomes operational. Similarly, a slack period occurs during the check-out phase, when UNMOs return their specialist equipment and undergo final clearance formalities. Protracted check-ins and check-outs reduce the effective stay of UNMOs in the field. DPKO should take measures to reduce this overhead time by streamlining the induction and check-out procedures.

31. Considering rotations, the UNMO Guidelines to troop-contributing countries state that at least three months prior to the completion of a tour of duty of an UNMO, the Military Division will send a fax to the respective country's Permanent Mission asking for a replacement. The procedure is based on the premise that the Permanent Missions need to be reminded to provide replacements. The entire procedure could be expedited if the data sought in the initial request to the Permanent Missions also included the date for providing replacements at the end of their tours of duty.

32. The rotation of UNMOs poses important challenges to the continuity of institutional memory, particularly if all of the UNMOs become due for rotation at the same time, as is being experienced in ONUB currently. This situation usually arises where the UNMOs are deployed and arrive in the mission all at once and when their tours of duty are of the same duration. OIOS is of the view that a system should be designed to stagger their rotation, based either on staggered arrivals to the

mission or different tours of duty, at least for the first group to arrive in the mission. Regarding in-mission rotations, it is of note that some team sites are located in remote areas, making their living conditions very harsh. Prolonged operation in these areas bears heavily on individual performance and morale. Missions should issue strict guidelines to ensure that UNMOs deployed in such difficult conditions are rotated frequently, preferably every three to four months.

33. Although a one-year tour of duty is the most common, OIOS found that some troop-contributing countries provided their personnel for only six months. Clearly, a one-year tour of duty is more beneficial for a mission and is better suited for ensuring the continuity of experience, thereby minimizing disruptive rotations and preserving institutional memory. The arbitrary variation of the tour of duty by individual troop-contributing countries should be discouraged and a one-year tour of duty should be standardized for all UNMOs.

VI. Security and safety

34. UNMOs are normally deployed unarmed in forward locations, and as such, they are vulnerable to attack, hostage-taking and harassment. They represent a vulnerable target, should belligerents wishing to put pressure on a peace operation as a whole, as has happened in a number of missions. A complicating factor is that contemporary intra-state conflicts are characterized by numerous small factions and splinter groups, making it virtually impossible to obtain the consent of all parties to the peace process. This greatly increases the risk to UNMOs because the smaller factions tend to seek visibility, attention and recognition by causing disorder and threatening the success of the mission.

35. In answering the OIOS questionnaire, almost 75 per cent of all respondents said that the challenges placed on individual UNMOs were becoming more demanding and that the threat to personal security and safety increased. In spite of the perception of increased risk, 77 per cent of respondents were convinced that UNMOs should not be armed even when operating in Chapter VII missions. The same share of respondents (77 per cent) believed that UNMOs should be provided with armed escorts for movement if the security situation became precarious. The Military Division also believes that UNMOs should not be armed.

36. The most common concern to UNMOs security was the availability of safe, reliable and efficient communications. It is not unusual for teams to conduct patrols outside the zone of communication and in some instances this has caused a team's failure to signal delays of its return to team sites. Missions should make every effort to ensure that UNMOs have reliable communications, both HF and VHF, including ground-to-air communications, upon deployment to a remote location. The installation of repeater stations and rebroadcast sites should be a matter of priority to help ensure that UNMO team sites are within communication range of the armed contingents in their sector.

37. A major safeguard to UNMOs security is provided in cooperation with the armed contingents. DPKO should ensure that SOPs, guidelines and force directives emphasize that responsibility for the safety of UNMOs rests with the armed contingents. Missions should also ensure that designated contingent units or sector headquarters have on standby a highly mobile quick reaction team, including aviation assets necessary for emergency extraction and evacuation of UNMOs. This

also requires joint training between UNMOs, armed contingents and mission aviation to prepare them for such emergencies.

38. One of the major security risks to UNMOs is their deployment to remote locations in small numbers. Since UNMOs receive mission subsistence allowances, they are not provided with living accommodation by the United Nations. Consequently, they make independent arrangements for individual living accommodation in the local communities in the area of deployment. Invariably, no threat assessment is ever made and each UNMO is left to fend for him/herself. OIOS is of the view that each mission should conduct regular threat assessments at the sector level and efforts should be made to arrange accommodations in close proximity to each other. Missions should also provide administrative support to UNMOs in drafting legal lease documents and, when necessary, provide local guards.

39. Although the use of advanced technology, such as night surveillance devices and satellite systems, could enhance security for UNMOs, OIOS believes that the main focus remains on proper training and selection, which should significantly lower the personal security risk faced by UNMOs. OIOS noted that in some cases, there was a general lack of awareness among UNMOs of any real risk management processes. In one particular case, UNMOs did not carry sufficient equipment to allow for their successful survival in the event of a forced escape and evasion or extraction; and even fewer were trained to undertake critical security assessments of their environment in order to prepare for unplanned occurrences.

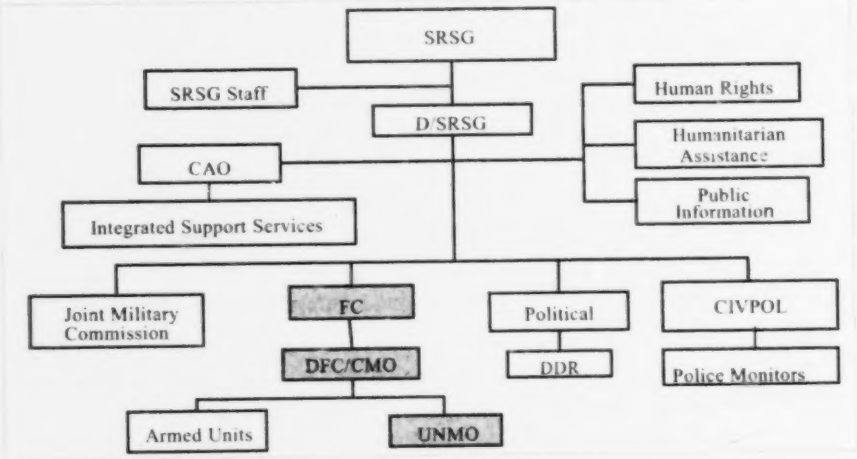
40. Since UNMOs do not carry defensive weapons, building relationships with belligerents can also play an important role in assisting UNMOs facing security challenges. OIOS noted examples when prompt and decisive intervention by senior UNMOs with commanders of belligerent detachments allowed the extraction of UNMOs under fire and in hostage situations. These examples underscore the importance and emphasize the need for proper selection criteria to identify the critical attributes for UNMOs, and also the benefits of training in negotiation and mediation, as well as communication and language skills.

41. All questionnaire respondents felt that UNMOs needed to have a separate identity from the armed contingents to clearly distinguish their unarmed status. Many of them suggested using distinctive arm bands or different head dress and different markings on UNMO vehicles as effective ways for identifying and distinguishing UNMOs from armed contingents. The generally accepted view is that belligerents do not consider UNMOs to be a threat because of their unarmed status. For that reason, it is imperative that they are clearly distinguishable from the armed contingents in order to enhance their personal security and safety. It could be done by distinctive markings on uniform and vehicles, special ID cards, clearly marked UNMO flag, and through public information messages. In addition, UNMOs could also have a distinguishing flag to be flown alongside the United Nations flag so that their premises are easily identified and accessible to both belligerent forces and the civilian population.

VII. Cooperation and coordination with other peacekeeping elements

42. Peacekeeping is a joint and closely coordinated effort of all mission components. Peacekeeping operations are manned by military personnel from many different nations and also by civilians from many United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Governments and United Nations civilian police. Complex peacekeeping missions comprise the full scope of such personnel. The first mission to be described as complex was the successful UNTAC mission in Cambodia, while current examples include UNTAET/UNMISET in East Timor, UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone and MONUC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. An example of the organizational structure of a complex mission is given below for MONUC.

Figure 6: Example of a complex peacekeeping mission (MONUC)



43. Cooperation and coordination is the keystone for efficiency and effectiveness in complex peacekeeping operations, particularly for UNMOs who operate in small groups in remote locations. There are two main aspects: first, the cooperation and coordination between the military components in the mission; and second, the cooperation and coordination with civilian counterparts.

44. The disruptions in cooperation and coordination between military units in general, and between UNMOs and armed contingents in particular, often result from the lack of a common understanding of their respective roles in the mission. The dire consequences of such failure could include:

- action that should be taken is not taken, because orders are not understood or are simply ignored;
- directives are misunderstood or interpreted as contrary to the mission mandate; and

- the personal security of UNMOs is threatened because of the potential misinterpretation of "use of force guidance" found in the rules of engagement.

45. A key aspect in addressing these potential failures in cooperation and coordination is effective communication. Effective communication requires that everyone be kept informed and briefed at all times and that there is a continuous sharing of information, especially between armed contingents and UNMOs. OIOS noted cases where belligerents would try to confuse peacekeeping units through disinformation in order to gain tactical or material advantages. In the absence of an effective communication system, both the UNMOs and the armed contingents could be rendered ineffective. Other equally important elements include the building of trust among officers and subordinates; the ability of the commander to communicate the mission and the concept of operations to all participating armed units and UNMOs; and the clarity of orders and instructions to generate consistent and coordinated action.

46. OIOS observed that UNMOs have access to groups and to sources within communities who are prepared to discuss matters with them that they would not ordinarily discuss with the armed elements of the Force. Some commanders in the Force therefore regard the success of the UNMOs as a challenge to their authority. In one example, a Force element disrupted the UNMO management of the disarmament process at a key point in the operation, which caused it to be temporarily halted and left for days in a precarious hiatus.

47. Effective cooperation and coordination of military elements are as much a matter of command and control as actual operational command. For effective cooperation to occur, the following conditions must be established:

- reliable information reporting structure and comprehensive communications plan;
- mutual awareness of the tasks of other elements and how each contributes to the overall mission objective;
- joint planning and training in areas requiring mutual support and cooperation;
- regular liaison and briefings on the activities of each element.

48. UNMO cooperation and coordination with civilians involves three key civilian groups, namely, the civilian component of the mission, civilian organizations and agencies in the mission area, and local conflicting parties and population. OIOS believes that, for the first two, the fundamentals of cooperation and coordination are:

- integrating civil dimensions into military planning and joint training;
- effective exchange of information;
- identifying the military support and cooperation required by various agencies; and
- establishing working groups, generating dialogue and maintaining liaison at all levels.

49. To promote effective UNMO cooperation and coordination with the local conflicting parties and population, the key elements include:

- having a professional knowledge and familiarity with local language, laws and customs;
- adequate interpretation/translation facilities available to UNMOs;
- meeting constantly — interaction reduces misunderstandings and builds mutual confidence and acceptance; and
- continuously briefing all those working together, so that differences are discussed before they become problems.

VIII. Exit strategy

50. Since UNMOs play a significant role in the end phases of the mission by continuing to monitor and observe in order to ensure the sustainability of the peace process, it is imperative that each mission should have an exit strategy for UNMOs that builds on benchmarks established at the outset of the mission. The exit strategies should be linked with the post-peacekeeping phase, with UNMOs assigned to assist in peacebuilding efforts to ensure long-term stability by helping to dispel the lingering mistrust among former belligerents. The exit strategy for UNMOs should, therefore, be derived from a thorough assessment of the potential challenges to the sustainability of the peace, rather than be dictated by a mechanical drawdown of the mission's strength.

51. OIOS believes that in developing the exit strategy, the costs and risks associated with the envisaged withdrawal should be assessed against the costs and risks of redeployment, should the peace process collapse prematurely. Such determination should take into account the extent to which the presence of the UNMOs could be perceived to imply that any of former belligerents are not trusted or, worse, that the United Nations is privy to some information about the imminent outbreak of hostilities that it is not sharing. If it is decided to extend the UNMO presence beyond the withdrawal of peacekeeping forces, the UNMOs to be retained should be selected on the basis of the fresh requirements and may even require additional training for operating in a new environment.

IX. Use of advanced technology

52. The availability of sophisticated new technology could be a key element in increasing credibility and enhancing operational effectiveness of UNMOs. Apart from improved military surveillance capabilities of the national troop contingents, such as night vision and better communications, there is insufficient recognition of the importance of other technology. Technology needs to be considered as a force multiplier and not as a substitute for good military judgment and operating techniques.

53. OIOS noted that over 90 per cent of UNMOs believed that the use of advanced technology such as night vision equipment, GPS and tracking technology for locating vehicles and hostages could improve their operational effectiveness. Most deemed new technology as essential for mobility, analysis and planning capacity, situational awareness and security. Surprisingly, however, the most urgent requirement projected in the field was for such basic equipment as binoculars,

prismatic compasses and radio communication. The more sophisticated technology reflected in UNMO responses includes the following:

- satellite imagery and ground sensors linked to monitoring centres, which could help to reduce the number of UNMOs;
- information technology, including tools for data analysis;
- use of GPS to pinpoint objects of observation and violation more accurately;
- electronic communications, including the Internet, e-mail and mobile telephony;
- hand-held devices for detecting and monitoring landmines, unexploded ordnance and chemical and biological warfare agents.

54. OIOS recognizes existing problems in deploying and using advanced monitoring and observation technologies. First, it is expensive, although the cost of new technology often declines rapidly, once it becomes widely available. Secondly, expert training would be required to allow personnel to use the advanced technology, especially since UNMOs are drawn from a wide variety of countries and military backgrounds. Thirdly, advanced technology may produce information overload, overwhelming the capacity of missions in the field to effectively and successfully use the information that becomes available. The missions may therefore have a further requirement to invest in data-processing and analytical capabilities.

55. OIOS believes that there is a need for well-planned incremental measures for technology insertion, aimed at optimum results in the multinational environment of peacekeeping. For purposes of compatibility and optimum resource utilization, DPKO should ensure that any advanced technology introduced to UNMOs is sourced from equipment stocks in the mission before procuring it in the open market. In addition, as conceded by DPKO, there is a need to address the challenges associated with training, interoperability and affordability. Acknowledging the importance of advanced technology, DPKO supports a phased insertion, so that Member States can prepare and train their officers, and considers such high-tech equipment only where a demonstrable need exists and this can be done within financial constraints. Based on the OIOS review, the Military Division of DPKO intends to examine the use of advanced technology in peacekeeping missions, with a view to improving conditions for missions and deployed personnel.

56. Based on the inputs from the staff, field commanders and UNMOs, and taking into account the current requirements, OIOS recommends adopting the following technologies in the medium term:

(a) GPS technology;

(b) tracking system to pinpoint the location of UNMOs taken hostage and hijacked vehicles;

(c) night-vision goggles and similar technology;

(d) mine detection and unexploded ordnance detection devices;

(e) advanced communications technology; and

(f) increased use of helicopters for mobility.

X. Individual performance appraisal

57. OIOS was satisfied that individual performance appraisals of UNMOs are conducted in all the missions. However, there is no standard system regarding the timing and frequency of performance reports, and it appeared that none of the UNMOs, including senior UNMOs, were quite sure about the distribution process after the performance appraisal reports were completed. In some instances, no appraisals were made until the very end of the UNMO tour, when they would be hastily prepared based on incomplete information.

58. OIOS believes that the following procedure should be established:

- team leaders should make interim performance reports for their UNMOs every three months and submit them to the UNMO sector headquarters.
- on completion of a tour or upon rotation, the senior UNMO should compile the final performance report based on the interim reports in the UNMO's personal file and after his/her review, submits it to the UNMO cell in Force Headquarters.
- senior UNMO or CMO should endorse the final report and have the appraised UNMO comment on and sign the report.
- performance reports for all UNMOs irrespective of rank should then be forwarded to DPKO for onward transmission to the UNMO's country through its Permanent Mission.
- copy of the final report should be filed in the DPKO/UNMO database for future reference.

XI. Backstopping by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations

59. OIOS observed that the Military Division was very responsive to military observer issues, which are handled by desk officers for the respective missions. However, there is a need to strengthen coordination and liaison with troop-contributing countries in regard to the standards for UNMO training and modalities for their deployment and repatriation. Equally important is to promote best practices and incorporate them into the UNMO resource material. OIOS noted that these functions are not clearly assigned to any of the four services making up the Military Division.

60. OIOS believes that UNMO debriefing reports provided at the end of their tours of duty provide valuable material for understanding emerging problems and challenges, and for discerning best practices. OIOS found that, so far, the majority of UNMOs were not involved in any lessons-learned exercises, nor did they receive any material such as a lessons-learned compendium or database on best practices. Such summaries of best practices and lessons learned could be provided online either by DPKO's Best Practices Unit or the Military Division.

61. OIOS is of the view that the main reason for the fact that these issues are not coordinated in a structured manner is because there is no single point of contact in DPKO that could be responsible for UNMO issues. Such coordination could be

achieved by establishing a focal point in the Military Adviser's office for UNMO policy issues, including security, administration, liaison and training.

XII. Conclusions

62. The role of UNMOs in providing timely and essential military information and analyses for multidimensional peacekeeping needs remains crucial, as is their support to many non-military aspects of the mission. OIOS found that there has been a continuous search in the field for an optimal configuration of reporting lines for such information and analyses, and for command and coordination arrangements. While improvements in command and control will undoubtedly have a positive impact on UNMO effectiveness, it should also be enhanced by strengthening UNMO cooperation and coordination with other mission elements, developing proper exit strategies, and equipping UNMOs with state of the art technology and facilitating exchange of best practices.

XIII. Recommendations

63. DPKO stated that it considers the review by OIOS to be useful and timely, as it was made at a time when the Department's policy on UNMOs was being updated, and as such, provided an additional source upon which current practices and procedures could be measured and assessed. OIOS considers the following recommendations crucial for improving the overall operational effectiveness of UNMOs in peacekeeping operations.

64. DPKO should develop a more generic and streamlined command and control structure for its peacekeeping missions with UNMOs and armed contingents. That structure should allow effective integration of UNMOs at the Force Headquarters level through a single unified chain of command, while maintaining operational independence at sector and lower levels (paras. 15-17) (SP-04-001-001).**

65. DPKO should develop: a mechanism to ensure that UNMOs attend a recognized military observers' course at a national peacekeeping training centre prior to deployment, and that they are provided with a certificate and course report detailing the training and proficiencies attained (para. 24); a system to help identify troop-contributing countries that provide UNMOs who are consistently poor performers and recommend steps that they can take to improve standards and ensure compliance (para. 25); and encourage greater participation of female UNMOs in peacekeeping missions (para. 28) (SP-04-001-002).

66. DPKO should: explore the use of a standby roster for improving its initial deployment of UNMOs in combination with the PMSTAR software package and rotation cell system by applying the experiences and lessons learned by the Civilian Police Division (para. 29); develop a system for staggering arrival, rotation and repatriation of UNMOs; and streamline the induction and checkout procedures (paras. 32-33) (SP-04-001-003).

67. DPKO should develop a comprehensive security plan for UNMOs to help ensure that: UNMOs always operate within range of the VHF/HF communications

** An internal code used by OIOS for recording recommendations.

systems of the armed contingents and are provided with armed escorts, when necessary (paras. 35-36); armed contingents maintain a quick reaction team, with ground-to-air communications as standby in each sector for response to emergency extraction/evacuation situations (para. 37); mission directives emphasize that the responsibility for the security of UNMOs rests with the armed contingents (paras. 37-38); and UNMOs are provided with a distinct identity to distinguish them from armed contingents in order to emphasize their unarmed status (para. 41) (SP-04-001-004).

68. DPKO should ensure that mission plans include an effective information reporting structure and a comprehensive communications plan to facilitate effective integration of UNMOs with other mission components (para. 43) (SP-04-001-005).

69. DPKO should ensure that proficient translators/interpreters are made available to UNMO teams that have a requirement for such services (para. 49) (SP-04-001-006).

70. DPKO should ensure that each mission has an exit strategy for UNMOs that builds on established benchmarks and links with the post-peacekeeping phase (paras. 50-51) (SP-04-001-007).

71. DPKO should examine availability and incrementally adopt such advanced technology tools for UNMOs as appropriate (para. 56) (SP-04-001-008).

72. DPKO should review the procedures for UNMO performance appraisals and ensure consistent adherence by missions (para. 58) (SP-04-001-009).

73. DPKO should ensure that the experience of UNMOs is summarized, analysed and made available online in the form of a compendium of best practices (para. 60) (SP-04-001-010).

74. DPKO should establish a focal point in the Military Adviser's office for UNMO policy issues (para. 61) (SP-04-001-011).

(*Signed*) Dileep **Nair**
Under-Secretary-General
for Internal Oversight Services